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anxious that the meeting have positive results, London is unable to suggest more than the establishment of a small science committee and an offer of scientific training in Britain.

An attempt may be made during the meeting to counter the effects of the vague Soviet offer of unlimited economic aid announced during the recent Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in Cairo. The council will also discuss the desirability of closer and more formal liaison with NATO and SEATO. An effort will probably be made to persuade the United States, now a member of the military, economic and countersubversion committees, to become a full member of the pact. (SECRET NO-[redacted])

STEPS TOWARD EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN UNION

Egyptian President Nasir apparently has decided to yield to Syrian importunities to begin negotiations on Egyptian-Syrian union. An early announcement on the question has been forecast by the Egyptian press. Agreement on the constitutional setup of the proposed union is still to come; present views seem to favor a "federal" relationship with a single president, i.e., Nasir. The target date for completion of a draft constitution is said to be August 1958, prior to the scheduled Syrian parliamentary elections.

Much of the psychological impact of the union move--which has been portrayed as a first step toward the Arab nationalist goal of a single united Arab state--may be lost during haggling over details on the constitution. Nasir, doubtful that the union is in his interests, has set stiff conditions--the removal of the Syrian Army from politics, the abolition of Syria's political parties, and assurances that full control will be in his hands. While the Syrian political leaders are now asserting loudly that they will make any sacrifice necessary to achieve union, it remains to be seen whether they will be able or willing to meet these terms in practice.

The Syrian Army almost certainly looks forward to a "removal" from politics like that which has taken place in Egypt, with army officers assuming the most important government positions. A still knottier problem over the longer run may be contrasting economic conditions; Egypt's economy is "controlled," while Syria's is relatively "free."

Syrian and Egyptian officials are now seeking to assure at least tacit Western approval for the move by telling Western diplomats that union is insurance against a Communist take-over in Syria. The Egyptians presumably still wish to neutralize or drop the two leading pro-Communists, Chief of Staff Bizri and Deputy Prime Minister Azm. However, the Syrians and Egyptians could with equal truth appeal to the USSR for support on the basis that Egyptian-Syrian union would be a stronger bar to a return of dominating Western influence to the area and that it would forestall any plans the "imperialists" might have for Syrian-Iraqi or some other type of Arab union. The USSR has evidently adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward a union after last summer's encouragement met with little response from Cairo.

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King Hussayn of Jordan is directly affected, since an organic tie between Cairo and Damascus would exercise a very strong attraction in West Jordan, for nationalistic, political, and economic reasons.

King Saud is in a difficult position on the issue. He cannot oppose it publicly for he himself is a leading proponent of Arab unity and has urged moves to block the rise of Communist influence in Syria. But Saud also fears Nasir's influence and the impact which the added prestige for Egypt's revolutionary philosophy might have within Saudi Arabia. Under these circumstances, Saud may feel that despite public appearances, he must covertly seek to hamstring the union. The American Embassy in Jidda reports that the present atmosphere there seems to be one of skepticism that the union plans will be carried out.

The Iraqis would seem less immediately concerned, although the Egyptian-Syrian moves would almost certainly shatter their own dream for an Iraqi-Syrian union. The Iraqis, like the Saudis, may believe there will be many more words than action on the union issue, and that their strategic position as the base of Western influence in the Arab states is not now endangered. They also might face internal problems if they came out openly against Egypt and Syria on this question; another Iraqi Army plot which involved middle-grade officers is reported to have been uncovered recently. (SECRET NOFORN)

SECRET KHRUSHCHEV-GOMULKA TALKS

The USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies may be preparing to announce countermeasures to the decisions taken at the Paris NATO meeting. At a reception at the Argentine Embassy in Warsaw on 20 January, the Soviet army attaché told the American military attaché that Khrushchev and Gomulka at their recent secret meeting near the Polish-Soviet border considered the interrelationship of the Warsaw Pact arrangements, the Rapacki plan, and the Paris decisions. The length of the meeting and the fact that neither the USSR nor Poland has commented on it suggest that there was considerable difficulty in reconciling divergent interests.

Several members of the Warsaw diplomatic corps have received a report that the meeting was attended by several Soviet and Polish generals, suggesting that military affairs were a major topic. The discussions also may have ranged over other subjects, including party affairs and economic aid to Poland.

Khrushchev may have suggested a Warsaw Pact meeting to formalize measures to counter the decisions made at the December Paris NATO conference. Khrushchev told an American journalist in November that countermeasures might include the equipping of the Warsaw Pact forces with nuclear weapons and guided missiles. Although frequent official Communist statements have declared that the action envisaged by the NATO conference would require a strengthening of the Warsaw Pact forces, Gomulka may have serious reservations about the basing of nuclear weapons or guided missiles in

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